Community Engagement Summary

February 3 to June 18, 2023

Draft Zoning Ordinance

August 2023

More information about Cville Plans Together can be found at: CvillePlansTogether.com

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Engagement Purpose

BACKGROUND

Cville Plans Together is a multi-year effort to update the city's Comprehensive Plan (including creation of a focused Affordable Housing Plan) and complete a re-write of the zoning ordinance. The Affordable Housing plan and Comprehensive Plan were completed in March and November, 2021 (respectively) and the City is working on the third piece – the zoning rewrite.

In this process, the goals are to ensure that:

1. The Zoning Ordinance supports the Comprehensive Plan (including the Future Land Use Map) and other adopted plans, such as Small Area Plans and the Affordable Housing Plan.
2. We mitigate the flaws and barriers to development previously identified by City planning staff and elected and appointed officials.
3. The new zoning will be easier to read and apply for everyone involved.

PURPOSE

The goal of the February to June 2023 community engagement effort was to share and gather feedback on the draft zoning ordinance and related materials. This was done in three parts, called Modules:

- Module 1 (Zoning Districts, Rules of Measurement, Use Table, Zoning Map)
- Module 2 (Development Standards)
- Module 3 (Subdivision and Development Plan Standards; Zoning Administration)

All input was considered as potential refinements to the zoning ordinance. Staff from the project team read every comment provided. These comments were frequently the subject of debate and discussion as the team worked through development of the consolidated draft ordinance.

Summary of Activities

Outreach

To make community members aware of the process and the input opportunity, the city and consultant team utilized many outreach tools.

- A dedicated webpage served as the hub for information about all available materials and upcoming events. This included recorded overview presentations for each Module. All materials can be viewed here: CvillePlansTogether.com/draft-zoning-v1/.
- The team provided updates through social media accounts (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter), email blasts (via existing City lists and the Cville Plans Together list), and media releases.
- Social media advertisements and both paper and digital newspaper advertisements (Daily Progress) were used to further build community awareness.
- Lawn signs and door hangers were offered to members of the Neighborhood Leaders Group, which includes leadership from neighborhood associations. The Cville Plans Together consultant team distributed these items in areas designated as Sensitive Community Areas in the Comprehensive Plan, if the neighborhood leaders were not able to distribute in those areas themselves.

Gathering Input

There were three separate community comment periods – one for each of the three Zoning Modules:

- Module 1 (Zoning Districts, Rules of Measurement, Use Table, Zoning Map): February 3 – April 30, 2023
- Module 2 (Development Standards): March 29 – April 30, 2023
- Module 3 (Subdivision and Development Plan Standards; Zoning Administration): May 24 – June 18, 2023

There was no single way that the project team was gathering feedback, and no one method of community input was prioritized or emphasized, to allow for flexibility in participation.

Open Houses

The project team conducted six community open houses. At these in-person events, there were several stations that provided background on the Cville Plans Together process and an overview of the zoning ordinance. Input at these events was gathered via paper feedback forms as well as through sticky note comments and discussions with staff. All open house display boards are available here: CvillePlansTogether.com/draft-zoning-v1/.

Module 1 Open Houses

- **February 22**: Charlottesville High School (cafeteria), 1400 Melbourne Rd, 6:00-8:30pm (102 attendees)
- **February 23**: Buford Middle School (cafeteria), 1000 Cherry Ave, 6:00-8:30pm (55 attendees)
- **February 25**: CitySpace, 100 5th Street NE, 11:00am-1:30pm (59 attendees)

Module 2 Open Houses

- **April 12**: Carver Recreation Center (Multi-purpose Room), 233 4th St NW, 4:00 – 7:00 pm (34 attendees)
- **April 15**: CitySpace (Main Conference Room), 100 5th Street NE, 10:00 am – 12:30pm (19 attendees)

Module 3 Open House

- **June 14**: CitySpace (Main Conference Room), 100 5th Street NE, 4:30-7:30 PM (33 attendees)

Letters and Emails

During the community comment periods, we received about 600 emails from approximately 390 individuals and several groups. This includes emails sent directly to the Cville Plans Together team as well as emails and letters sent to City staff, City Councilors, Planning Commissioners, and Steering Committee members, where that correspondence was shared with the Cville Plans Together team.

Feedback Form

A feedback form was available for each Module, for those who prefer to respond to specific questions rather than submit general comments via email or in other ways. The community was also able to upload documents with images, etc.

Meetings

In addition to the open houses, there were several meetings at which the Department of Neighborhood Development Services provided an overview of the draft documents and gathered feedback. This includes:

Planning Commission/City Council Joint Work Sessions

- **February 28**
  - Topic: Module 1 of the draft Zoning Ordinance
  - A recording is available here
- **March 29**
  - Topics: Module 1; Module 2 Overview
  - A recording is available here

- **April 25**
  - Topic: Module 2
  - A recording is available here
- **May 23**
  - Topics: Module 3; Module 1 (draft Zoning Map)
  - A recording is available here
- **July 5**
  - Topic: Module 1 (draft Zoning Map)
  - A recording is available here
- **July 13**
  - Topic: Module 1
  - A recording is available here

Cville Plans Together Steering Committee

- **March 1**
  - Topic: Module 1
  - A recording is available here
- **May 24**
  - Topics: Module 2 and Module 3
  - A recording is available here

Discussions Related to Sensitive Community Areas

NDS convened two small, informal discussions with residents from neighborhoods designated as Sensitive Community Areas in the Comprehensive Plan. The goal of these sessions was to share information about the intention of the Sensitive Community Areas, as described in the Comprehensive Plan, and discuss ways to potentially address affordability and displacement needs in these areas, both through zoning mechanisms and other non-zoning mechanisms.

- **February 9**
- **April 13**

Overview of Input Themes

There were nearly 600 comments provided, with a range of topics. This section contains a high-level summary of the most common themes from input received via all methods noted in the previous section. You can review all comments received at the links below.

Appendix Containing All Written Comments: View here

TOP COMMENT THEMES

- **More than 100 comments**
  - Requests for zoning map changes for specific parcels or small areas – includes requests for both reduced and increased intensity
  - Concerns about the adequacy of existing infrastructure to support the proposed zoning changes, particularly related to parking, stormwater management, and road safety
- **50-100 comments**
  - Support for improving affordability and/or concerns about displacement
  - Desire for allowing more height or density to support housing development
  - Support for the elimination or lowering of parking mandates
  - General support for draft zoning ordinance
  - Environmental concerns, including calls for increased tree coverage, preservation of old-growth trees, avoiding building on floodplains, and maintaining the city's unique and environmentally-friendly character

ALL COMMENT THEMES

Comments under each theme are listed in rough order of number of comments received related to that theme.

Zoning Map and Districts

- Requests for zoning map changes for specific parcels or small areas – includes requests for both reduced and increased intensity
- Desire for allowing more height or density to support housing development
- Questions about interpreting the draft zoning ordinance
- Desire for more small commercial uses in residential areas
- Support for addressing housing affordability, and allowing some increase in housing intensity, but desire to see less intensity than currently discussed (either in general, or in specific areas)
- General comments that there is too much density proposed
- Want little or no small commercial uses in residential areas
- Request to remove non-demolition density bonus

Development Standards

- Support for the elimination or lowering of parking mandates
- Concerns about the scale of development, particularly in or adjacent to residential neighborhoods
- Environmental concerns, including calls for increased tree coverage, preservation of old-growth trees, avoiding building on floodplains, and maintaining the city's unique and environmentally-friendly character
- Support for removal or lowering of parking minimum requirements
- Support for reduced setbacks
- Desire to keep parking mandates
- Concerns about building height
- Concerns about reduced setbacks
- Lighting standards

Affordability, Equity, Displacement

- Support for improving affordability and/or concerns about displacement
- Questions and comments about Sensitive Community Areas
- Property tax concerns

Process

- Outreach/engagement questions
- Desire to see more coordination with the County and UVA

Infrastructure

- Concerns about the adequacy of existing infrastructure to support the proposed zoning changes, particularly related to parking, stormwater management, and road safety
- Desire to see better bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities to support increased housing intensity

Other Topics

- Concerns about impacts of by-right development
- Concerns related to historic districts and entrance corridors